

May 6, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen  
Chief Administrative Officer

## **EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR YOUTH 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER**

On March 5, 2002, your Board directed the Resource Development Administrator, Chief Administrative Officer, and the Interagency Consortium to analyze the feasibility of creating an emergency shelter for youth 18 years of age and older who are under the jurisdiction of the Dependency Court. This is to provide the results of this analysis.

### **Background**

Currently, approximately 1,300 youth age 18 years or older are under the jurisdiction of the Dependency Court. These youth reside in an array of different settings throughout the County, with the largest percentage (41% in March 2002) found in relative homes. The remaining youth were placed as follows: 19% - certified family homes, 13% - foster family homes, 11% - group homes, 7% - court specified home, 6% - guardian homes, 1% - small family homes, and less than 1% in other foster care and County shelter home.

When youth 18 years and older fail their current placement and an alternative placement cannot be found, these youth are brought to MacLaren Children's Center (MCC). Licensing restrictions preclude the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) from placing youth 18 years and older in foster home or group home emergency beds; therefore, all youth in this age category identified as needing emergency shelter in Los Angeles County reside at MCC.

Since September 2001, approximately three youth age 18 or older each month have been admitted to MCC and two 17 year olds turned 18 while residing at MCC. While the number of MCC youth in this age range was as high as 18 in August 2001, efforts to find appropriate placements in lieu of emergency shelter since that time have been successful. As a result, only two youth age 18 years and older currently reside at MCC. However, we recognize that there may be other youth in the foster care system who could benefit from an emergency shelter.

### **Task Force Recommendations**

As a result of your motion, we called together a task force of representatives from DCFS, Probation, Department of Mental Health, Community Development Commission, and the Chief Administrative Office to look at the feasibility of creating an emergency shelter for the 18 and older population.

In looking at the needs of this population, we recommend building on existing infrastructure, namely expanding the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP), which provides transitional housing for pre-emancipated youth. This program not only offers housing but also provides the youth with the services and support they need to emancipate.

Until this year, THPP served only 17 and 18 year old pre-emancipated youth enrolled in the County's Independent Living Program (ILP), who were seniors in high school and expected to graduate within one year, and were in good standing with their schools and with their current placements. In January 2002, THPP expanded eligibility by extending it to 16 year olds and by specifically adding otherwise eligible probation youth and youth using psychotropic medications. We recommend exploration of further expansion of the program to include low-functioning teens.

As noted in the Economy and Efficiency Commission's report, THPP is currently under-utilized. The stated goal of the program is to serve 600 youth per year; however, as of mid-November 2001, only 65 youth from the DCFS and Probation systems had been admitted into the program.

In summary, unless otherwise directed, we will pursue the expansion of the THPP program for youth 18 years and older who are under the jurisdiction of the Dependency Court.

### **Reporting**

We will provide a quarterly progress report to your Board on our efforts.

Each Supervisor  
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Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information, or your staff may contact Karen Kent at (626) 455-4509.

DEJ:SRH  
EN:KK

c:     Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
         County Counsel  
         Chief Probation Officer  
         Director, Children and Family Services  
         Director, Community and Senior Services  
         Director, Consumer Affairs  
         Director, Health Services  
         Director, Mental Health  
         Director, Public Social Services  
         Executive Director, Community Development Commission